

A New *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia: Scincidae) from Western Australia

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Abstract

The new species, *C. zasticus*, is a member of the *C. atlas* species-group. It is confined to a sandplain near the mid-west coast of Western Australia.

Introduction

In November 1982 L.A. Smith and R.E. Johnstone visited a sandplain south of Shark Bay, where they collected two specimens of an undescribed *Ctenotus*. Subsequently three more specimens were collected within a kilometre of the first two.

Ctenotus zasticus sp. nov.

Figure 1

Holotype

R84300 in Western Australian Museum, collected on 7 August 1983 by G. Harold and C. Winton at 16 km S of Hamelin HS, Western Australia, in 26°34'S, 114°14'E.

Paratypes

North-West Division (W.A.)

17 km S Hamelin HS (81783-4), and 16 km S (82732-3).

Diagnosis

A long-tailed member of the *Ctenotus atlas* species-group (Storr *et al.* 1981) with 8 white stripes (paravertebral, dorsolateral, midlateral and ventrolateral) and 4 series of pale brown spots (laterodorsal and upper lateral). Some members of the *atlas* group have an upper lateral series of spots, but the present species alone has a laterodorsal series.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 55-60. Length of appendages (% SVL): foreleg 26-29, hindleg 48-50, tail 248-258 (N 3).

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Figure 1 Holotype of *Ctenotus zasticus*, photographed in life by G. Harold.

Nasals in short to moderate contact. Prefrontals in moderate contact (N 4) or narrowly separated (1). Supraoculars 4, first three in contact with frontal, second wider than third but not wider than first. Supraciliaries 7, fourth to penultimate considerably smaller than others. Upper ciliaries 10-11. Second loreal 1.8-2.3 times as wide as high. Presuboculars 2. Upper labials 8. Ear lobules 3-4, mostly subacute, second usually largest. Nuchals 3-4. Midbody scale rows 24 (N 1) or 26 (4). Toes compressed; 24-25 lamellae under fourth, each with a narrow to moderately wide callus.

Head dark brown. Back and sides blackish with 8 white stripes (a very narrow paravertebral and dorsolateral, narrow midlateral and a moderately narrow ventrolateral) and 4 series of pale brown or brownish-white spots or short dashes (a variably developed laterodorsal beginning well behind arm and terminating at base of tail, and an upper lateral from ear to base of tail). Tail brown with 6 pale brown or brownish-white stripes (paravertebral, dorsolateral and midlateral) continuous with those on body. Legs dark brown, striped with pale brown. Lower surfaces whitish, tinged in life with green.

Distribution

Confined to an isolated belt of *Triodia* and *Eucalyptus* on red sand south of Shark Bay, Western Australia.

Remarks

The above *Triodia/Eucalyptus* covers about 150 sq. km on Hamelin and Coburn Stations. It is also notable for the only known population of *Ctenophorus rubens* south of Lake MacLeod (Storr and Harold 1980).

Ctenotus zastictus is probably nearest to *C. iapetus* Storr of the Exmouth region and could have differentiated from that species by the modification of the laterodorsal and upper lateral stripes into series of spots.

The name is derived from the Greek *za-* (much) + *stictos* (spotted).

References

- Storr, G.M. and Harold, G. (1980). Herpetofauna of the Zuytdorp coast and hinterland, Western Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 8: 359-375.
- Storr, G.M., Smith, L.A. and Johnstone, R.E. (1981). *Lizards of Western Australia. I. Skinks.* (University of Western Australia Press with Western Australian Museum: Perth.)